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Office of Information, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

KILLING OFF THE PRAIRIE DOGS.

Good Progress in Eradicating Pest, Reported By
Biological Survey--Other Activities of the Bureau.

Washington, D. C., The extermination of prairie dogs over large areas has been practically completed, according to the report of the Bureau of Biological Survey, just published by the United States Department of Agriculture, and wide stretches of valuable grazing lands have been entirely cleared of this pest. In national forests in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Oklahoma, more than 95 per cent of the prairie dogs have already been destroyed. Active campaigns are still in progress in Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, and South Dakota, and in the Rio Grande forest in Colorado.

The average cost of distributing poison on areas infested by prairie dogs has now been reduced to less than 5 cents an acre. In cases where reinfestation has made it necessary to go over the land again, the cost has not exceeded 3 cents an acre. Poisoned oats have been found to give the most consistent results, except in the Coconino forest in Arizona, where a species of blue-stemmed grass is abundant. The prairie dogs are so fond of this that they care little for grain whether poisoned or not.

The Biological Survey is also carrying on work against ground squirrels, pocket gophers, jack rabbits, moles, mountain beavers, pine mice, and crawfish, as well as against wolves and coyotes in the West. The crawfish, which are so injurious in parts of Mississippi and Alabama, can be kept away at an annual expenditure, it is estimated, of 25 cents an acre or less after the lands have been once thoroughly treated,

While endeavoring to destroy these and other pests, the Bureau is also encouraging an increase of population of beneficial birds. The results of the second bird census in the spring of 1915 showed that bird life can be largely increased throughout the country. Where efforts are made to protect the birds the population increases rapidly.

Of the new national bird reservations established during the ~~past year, two are in Washington, and one in Minnesota.~~ In all sixty-seven such reservations are now in charge of the Department. With few exceptions the conditions on them are said to be very favorable to the increase of bird life.